

Secret
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*USSR: Early October Prospects for
Grain Production*

Secret
GC AB 76-008
8 October 1976

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USSR: EARLY OCTOBER GRAIN PROSPECTS

Prospects continue for a bumper grain harvest. As of 7 October, we estimate Soviet grain production at 205 million metric tons, up 5 million tons from our early September estimate. This would be the second highest Soviet grain harvest and a dramatic comeback from last year's drought reduced level of 140 million tons.

Statements by Soviet officials have been optimistic concerning this year's crop prospects. In fact, General Secretary Brezhnev has privately suggested the possibility of a record harvest. [REDACTED] analysis in several key areas is primarily responsible for the more modest EAS assessment of Soviet grain prospects. 25X1D

Although all the Soviet crop forecasts have been bullish, they reflect a wide range of expectations. Until harvesting is completed in late October, considerable uncertainty remains.

Status of Grain Crops

Soviet grain production is estimated at 205 million metric tons, up 5 million tons from our early September estimate.¹ The revised estimate largely reflects new photographic information which:

- Confirms Soviet reports of record-breaking yields in many oblasts of the Western Ukraine,

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Note: This paper was produced by the Office of Geographic and Cartographic Research and coordinated with the Office of Economic Research. Comments and questions may be directed to [REDACTED] Code 143, Extension 3748. Date of information 7 October 1976.

¹ The EAS estimate is consistent with official Soviet reports of production based on "bunker weight"; that is, as grain comes from the combine. Not all of this grain is usable. The bunker weight measure does not reflect losses in handling and transportation and includes excess moisture, trash, dirt, weed seeds, and grain admixtures. Wet weather this year is expected to result in higher than normal moisture content, particularly for barley, oats, and winter wheat.

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- Indicates improved yields in Kazakhstan, the middle Volga, and Southern Urals, and
- Indicates grain losses primarily in regions of Central European USSR due to wet harvest conditions (see photo).

Statements made by Soviet officials concerning this year's harvest prospects have been optimistic but diverse, ranging from 195 million metric tons to something just over the 1973 record crop of 222.5 million tons.

- In late August, Soviet Minister of Agriculture Mesyats, indicated that the grain harvest would be over 200 million tons 1976.
- On 14 September, A. Deryabin, Deputy Chief, Department of Industrial Meat Production, Ministry of Agriculture, told the U.S. agricultural attaché in Moscow that the harvest should be "more than 200 million, but we must see how much more." He then backtracked to say "it could also be around 195."
- On 22 September, General Secretary Brezhnev told former Ambassador Harriman, "the 1976 grain harvest is expected to be even better than 1973, which was a record year."
- On 5 October, Brezhnev, in a French TV interview, predicted that the Soviet Union would enjoy "a very good harvest of grain crops" this year.

Numerous regional yield and production figures have appeared in the Soviet press. These reports cover an area of approximately 61 million hectares, or 47 percent of the area sown to grain. In many instances these figures exceed those of the EAS adjusted system. [REDACTED] analysis in several key areas has been responsible for the more modest EAS assessment of the crop prospects.

A harvest of 205 million metric tons would exceed last year's disastrous crop by 65 million tons and would be second only to the record 1973 harvest of 222.5 million tons (see Table). Production of this magnitude would be near the 1976 goal of 207 million tons.

Despite wet harvest problems in parts of the Central European USSR, the pace of the harvest has quickened since mid-August. Harvesting as of 3 October is complete on nearly 117 million hectares, approximately 94 percent of the area sown to grain, excluding corn. However, harvest prospects for the remaining crop are still uncertain. Much of the remaining grain area is in the east, where frost, snow, and rain usually prevail during October. In addition, deterioration of conditions in the Ukraine could curtail corn production.

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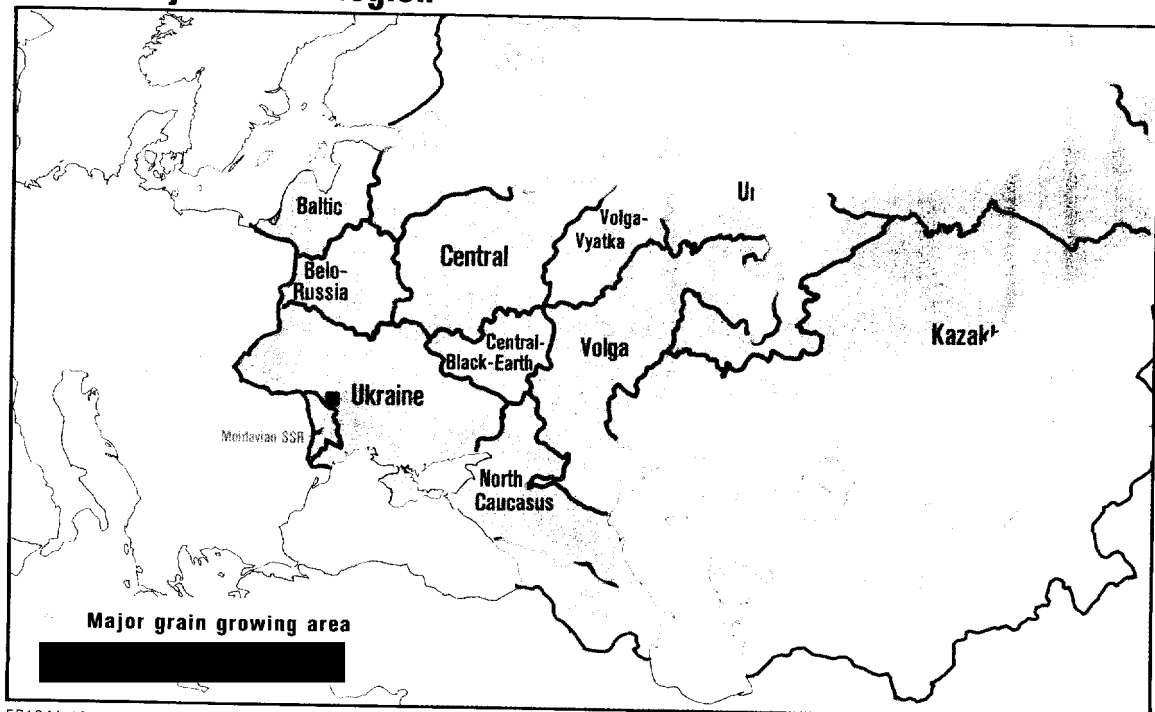
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TABLE

USSR: Grain Production ¹

	Million Metric Tons						
	Annual Average 1966-70	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	Annual Average 1971-75 Estimated 1976
Total	167.6	181.2	168.2	222.5	195.6	139.9	181.5
Winter grains	50.8	63.0	40.6	63.5	62.5	48.6	55.6
Wheat	35.9	47.8	29.4	49.4	44.7	36.6	41.6
Rye	12.8	12.8	9.6	10.8	15.2	9.0	11.5
Spring grains	116.7	118.2	127.6	159.0	133.1	91.2	125.8
Wheat	54.3	51.1	56.6	60.5	39.2	29.5	47.4
Barley ²	28.3	32.3	35.1	51.7	51.6	32.8	40.7
Oats	11.9	14.6	14.1	17.5	15.3	12.5	14.8
Corn	9.6	8.6	9.8	13.2	12.1	7.3	10.2
Pulses	7.2	7.0	7.1	8.5	8.7	5.3	7.3
Millet	2.9	2.0	2.1	4.4	2.9	1.1	2.5
Rice	1.0	1.4	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.0	1.8
Buckwheat	1.2	1.1	0.8	1.3	1.0	0.5	0.9

¹ Because of rounding, components may not add to the totals shown.² Includes winter barley and mixed grains.**USSR: Major Grain Region**

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